52 F S. 1st June. 1938

That an angel - I mean the gift to the Library. In return you shall have all the autographs you want for all the Rembrandts in Europe - But what does it mean? autograph collecting? Something legal, like the duke that I expect.

The book comes out tomorrow. Its only a piece of donkey-drudgery; & as it repeats in shrill prose the tears, which, rightly, you detest like, I hadn't meant to send it. But I will, by way of thanks, & you need not read it nor write & say you have. Both those books are now off my mind, thank God. Why did I feel I must write them? Lord knows.

When you left in your dripping black Car the other night I exclaimed (there is

perhaps it would stand in a court of law with my hand on a Bible). I think Vita is the nicest person we know. And I said Yes. So your feelings about our house is very welcome to the old wolves: & they hope there'll be as many evenings with Vita in future as the home will hold. Oh dear how grim life can be: & how merciful some moments are -

I think he would like to come. That slippery little sandhopper, Jeremy, led me to think, by some insidious report he made, that Ben had it in for me: & when he died dine here: & no, very respectfully. I'd determined not to ask him again. (though in fact I suspected Jeremy of this) what is Ben's address? I'll remember, & he as mum as a mouse. And he's so like you I couldn't help thinking that him.

No steps from Eden. There's a fate against my journey. But I mean to & would like very much to see the marionettes. So prod her from behind - just on to M-H. where, Lord be praised, we stay a week: then here: then Scotland.

Hs Mother you would like it

Potter's autograph.

HAMILL & BARKER 2/5/62

52 T.S. 22nd July 1938

Leonard says you have sent a poem, & would like to know what I think of it. Now I would like to read it – normally would give an opinion with my usual audacity. But I want to explain: constituted as I am (not as I ought to be) I feel I can't read your poem impartially which your letter I have somewhere but won't just remain unsubstantiated. I feel, I mean, that you have thought me dishonest in 3 ff. & said something about it being "misleading" & suggested that if only you

werenit incurably clumsy honest &
slow witted yours. you could
demolish my precious humbug.
You could knock me down
with your honest old
English fists & I'd an. And
then you tickled me over
with praise of Chaucer &
Villon. This is only a
recollection: but NYPL arthur (it.
reverberates: & bring. for
impatient as I am, I
know that I should hear
these growlings & mutterings
darkening your poem. And
with my (though you might hardly
ct) dogged belief in the
absolute necessity of absolute
honesty about poetry, I could not
say what I thought: because I shouldn't
be capable of pure thinking.

So come to lunch: & we
need not, if you dont wish it,
discuss either my prose or your
poetry. being, as I maintain,
quite fond of each other for
other reasons. The postponse &
the Jabberwock peach at the
Jabberwock for instance.

A rush on anthology nature
here. We cant crowd out
this untidy letter. Dotty rings
up to ask us to go to meet
Gerald. &c. &c.

Your old humbug

J.

July 23. 1938

Saturday. Worthing Villa

What on earth can I have said to call forth your telegram? God knows. I scribbled it off in five minutes, never read it through, & can only remember that it was written in a ~~vein~~ vein of obvious humorous Extravagana & in a tearing hurry. However, I'll try to explain — but what a fool I must be .. what happened was this.

Lear and showed me a letter from you in which you said you'd like my opinion of your poem if I had time to read it. Now I've been in a rush & haven't had time. It came into my head, as I went down stairs that you had never answered a letter I wrote you from Northumberland in answer to your letter about 3 qp. And I had a vague memory that you had said something which had ~~th~~ slightly irritated me — you know how one gets a whole shower of letters when a book comes out & I was feeling ~~th~~ a little harassed — because I thought you meant that I was not quite honest in what I said in 3 qp. And I should mend for to think that very much. I've now looked for your letter & this was the phrase: "You are a tantalising writer because at one moment you enchant one with your lovely prose & next moment exasperate one with your misleading arguments .. And far be it from me to cross words with you publicly, for I should always lose on points in fencing, though if it come to fisticuffs I might knock you down. So long

Or you play the gentleman's game, with the gentleman's technique, You win!" That was the phrase that slightly (not to say lightly or wrongly) & I think in my letter from Nassau I (whether asked you to explain what you meant by it. Well, you never did; & as I came downstairs I thought, "Oh vita never answered my letter, so I suppose she did mean something. And I can't sit down & read her poem if she thinks me dishonest. or whatever it was that she did think me!" But I was so hurried & took the whole thing so lightly, & had also such implicit faith in my own power to convey this carelessness hurried vague Shrivana in writing that I never bothered to re what you had said, & dashed off the letter which must have been a triumph of misrepresentation. Its a lesson not to write letters. For I suppose you'll say, when you read what I've quoted from your own letter, that there's nothing to cause even a momentary misrepresentation. NYPL And I daresay you're right. I sometimes suspect that anything written acquires meanings & both the writer's mood & the reader's mood queer the pitch. So let us leave it.

One reason for writing in the way that I thought I should not have a chance of talking when we did meet. But, as I say, let us leave it & I apologise, & will never write a letter so carelessly again. And I've no Shrivana whatever; & you need say no more, because I'm just sure, on re-reading your letter, you didn't mean that I was dishonest: & that's the only thing I minded. So forgive & forget

V.

52 T. S. Monday
July 25
1938

No I never got your Ykye
letter, or we should do-
Nizarchan. So that's
Explained — & for the rest
let's wait to argue till we
meet — it's argue we must.
(& of course, tho') don't agree with
your deductions, there are
any number of possible, & natural,
Disagreements)

It was the feeling that you
thought me ~~stuck~~ slightly that
I minded: but that cleared up

I then as only waiting again in
a further week, to say that
of all one, to
explain that we went to
Florida only a
much nicer place: I hearing nothing
I was expectant.
We hope to go
on Wednesday
Lunch.
V.

NYPL

Monk's House,
Rodmell,
near Lewes,
Sussex.

27th Oct 1938

Yes, Mrs Nicholls has handed me a copy of your book: which I certainly consider my due, under an inscription. I don't believe you care a damn what I think of it. However, I'll tell you when I've read it, if you want to know. Yes, so far as I know, Nov^r. 17^th will suit perfectly: the whole day if you like. If you can't spend the whole day junketing back out any

position yet: lunch, dinner, tea: all there.
We're down here, thank the Lord, but
only momentarily; yesterday we
travelled on books in Horsham, where
Shelley worshipped: tomorrow it's
Hastings — who lived there? Want
to remember. Stephen I've stolen a
walk in hot sun along the
river which was brimming blue,
a kind of watery summer, free here,
& very free: but you'll have seen all
this for yourself. We plan to stay
here for two: in which case I should
like an day in solitude as even you
could wish. After, back we go
on Saturday to my mother in law's
for a birthday party, a dybbuk, a Max
Beerbohm — But let me know
some time about the 17th.

YK

NYPL

HAMILL & BARKER 2/5/62